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## AUSTRIA

### I. Status and Strength of the Communist Party

Profiting from effective support of Soviet occupation authorities, the Communist Party of Austria won parliamentary representation for the first time in 1945. The Party is restricted to a small segment of the industrial workers and has remained at about five per cent of the popular vote since 1945, dropping somewhat below this figure in the 1956 elections when it won only 192,438 votes or 4.4 per cent of the total and only 3 seats in parliament. The estimated membership is 50,000. The Party's main concern at the end of 1957 seemed to be the problem of self-preservation.

The most flagrant display in the postwar period of Austrian Communist militant action which involved the use of terrorism took place in the fall of 1950 during general strikes called at that time. The specific grievances which the Communists seized upon as a pretext to launch their disturbances were the negotiations leading to the Fourth Wage and Price Agreement which was to become effective 1 October 1950. The population was irritated at having been kept in ignorance of the negotiations and the Communists capitalized on the situation by placing themselves at the leadership of what they hoped was mass opposition to government economic legislation.

### II. Party Units Responsible for Sabotage, Assassination, Kidnapping or Terrorist Missions

The Central Strike Committees and the Local Strike Headquarters were in charge of the aggressive action during the September-October 1950 strikes, at least during the first phase of the strikes. The Central Strike Committee was comprised of sixty-two members, all Communists. It was apparently directly responsible to the Austrian Communist Party (KPOe) Central Committee. Local strike headquarters were set up in many cities in Austria, including Vienna, and sometimes included non-Communist workers. One strike headquarters in Styria consisted

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of nine Communists, three League of Independents (VdU) supporters and two people having no political party affiliation.

To carry out acts of violence and force were KPOs *Rollkommandos* (mobile shock groups) which had reportedly been formed and in the process of training since 1948. These mobile groups were brought into action for the first time during the September-October 1950 strikes. The groups consisted of militant Communists and hired henchmen and were formed of workers of the USIA (Russian abbreviation for "Administration of Soviet Property in Austria") plants and other large factories throughout Austria. Each group was formed from employees of one factory. Some of the best trained were reported to have been formed from guard units of the Austrian oil fields.

The groups moved about from factory to factory forcing strikes and attacking power plants, communication centers, labor chambers, police stations, etc. In and around Vienna the *Rollkommandos* (and other Communist demonstrators) attempted to take control of trolley car terminals and to erect railroad and street blockades. *Rollkommandos* were most successful in the Wiener Neustadt area. They were rushed to non-striking plants to try to coerce workers into striking; they often resorted to terrorism to force the closing down of factory operations. Some of the *Rollkommando* men were armed with rubber truncheons and steel whips.

Direction of the second phase of the strike appeared to be more directly under the Central Committee of KPOs which this time worked behind a new front committee called the Conference of Shop Stewards from all over Austria. This body issued a three-point demand to the Austrian government and threatened a general strike all over Austria if the demands were not met. The majority of shop stewards who participated in this conference were not elected by factory workers nor by any trade union but were self-appointed, mostly Communists from the Vienna area. Arrangements for the conference had been entirely in KPOs hands. Unrealistic demands made by the conference were identical in nature with those of which KPOs had been clamoring since the beginning of the strike agitation campaign.

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### **III. Sabotage Training Given within Austria**

For several weeks prior to the outbreak of the 1950 strikes, Communist factory workers were apparently given specific instructions on ways they should contribute to strike action. They were requested to prepare surveys on points in their plants which could be damaged most easily and to submit reports on the attitudes of their fellow workers. They were instructed in methods of influencing non-Communists to carry out Communist planned action--either by persuading such persons that activity introduced by KPOs was harmless and necessary for the good of the worker, or by various promises of reward, or by making threats of reprisal in case non-Communist workers failed to cooperate. Thus both theoretical as well as practical training was given in preparation for a campaign of aggressive action.

### **IV. Sabotage Training Given Austrian Communists in Communist Bloc Countries**

There is no evidence that KPOs members have received training in sabotage in Communist Bloc Countries for future KPOs action of this nature.

### **V. Sabotage, Assassination, Kidnapping\*, Terrorist Missions and Targets**

#### **a. U.S. and/or U.S. Allies Personnel, Installations**

On 16 November 1951 Communists organized demonstrations against the visits of some U.S. Congressmen. There was shouting and hurling of insults and some arrests were made, but there was no violence and no injuries.

\*Although there have been a number of kidnappings, as far as is known these were carried out by the RIS rather than the local Communist Party.

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On approximately 19 April 1952 anti-U. S. demonstrations were again organized by Communists, some of whom were arrested. There appears to have been no violence.

In mid-June 1952 Austrian Communists were planning an anti-U. S. demonstration during Dean Acheson's visit to Vienna. The Wiener Kurier, a U.S.-sponsored publication was subsequently banned in the Soviet-controlled sectors of Vienna because of its disclosure of Communist anti-Acheson demonstration plans. No Communist demonstrations were held during the Acheson visit.

Communists staged mass demonstrations in September 1952 outside the Gartenbau Kino theater in Vienna and used force to prevent people from attending the showing of the U.S. film "The Desert Fox". There were minor scuffles with the police, but apparently no injuries were caused.

b. Other Sabotage Targets

During the September-October 1950 strikes, KPO's intention was to exploit public annoyance over the regulation of wages and prices and to organize demonstrations which would appear as a "spontaneous" mass movement and would be the final blow against the government. The first objective after the strike headquarters committees had been set up and the Rotkommandos alerted was the physical seizure of the Trade Union Centers. A typical incident occurred in the city of Linz, in Upper Austria on 26 September 1950, where the Rotkommando groups first went from shop to shop with the order, "March on the Linz Chamber of Labor". By eleven o'clock that morning the crowds had forced their way into the Linz Chamber and, threatening physical harm, had forced the President of that organization to resign. Thereupon, a "provisional Provincial Executive of the Association of Trade Unions" was created by KPO members. The provisional "Executive" called the Rotkommandos into service

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and dispatched them to factories where workers refused to strike, and a number of factories were then compelled to close down. At Linz the Rotkommandos also went into the railway station and erected barricades on the tracks. For several hours Communists in Linz held both the Labor Chamber and the railroad station.

Occupation of Strategic Centers. KPOs tactics called for the occupation by Rotkommandos of railroad centers, post and telegraph offices, streetcar terminals, electric power and gas plants. On 3 October 1950, for example, targets in Lower Austria marked for occupation were: (a) an electric power plant at Ebenfurth (source of power for many factories in the Wiener Neustadt area); (b) railroad stations; (c) the post office at Gaensersdorf (post offices in Austria almost invariably also include the local telegraph office); (d) the main police station and street car terminal at Baden; (e) post office, railroad station and police station at St. Andrae Woerden and the vicinity; (f) the post office in St. Valentin.

Blocking of Roads. To cause the isolation of Vienna, to prevent workers from reaching their factories and to render the Federal departments ineffective and powerless, the KPOs tried with road blocks to stop the normal flow of traffic. On 26 September at least two highways were blocked and by blockades at various street intersections and the main avenues of approach to Vienna were closed temporarily. Eleven street car lines were out of operation during that morning. Some attacks were launched against streetcar terminals. To block the tracks, Communists poured cement on the switches and track crossings; they dumped sand, cement blocks, broken pavement and even truckloads of garbage and rubble on the car tracks. Wooden, stone and brick blockades were erected and parked buses, trucks and derailed trolley cars were left on the tracks to prevent operation of the cars. Similar blockades were built on streets and bridges leading out of Vienna.

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Disruption of Economic and Industrial Activity. After gaining control of the trade union centers, Communists plotted to effect strikes by persuasion or by force on a national scale. Procedure for strike action in Lower Austria and Vienna included the following phases of action: (a) blocking of traffic to prevent workers from reaching their factories; (b) detaining at certain points those workers who were determined to continue on their way to the factories; (c) use of *Reihkommandos*, supplied with trucks, motorcycles or other means of quick transfer, to bring about strikes where workers were not cooperating with the Communists.

Organising of Demonstrations. Workers were either encouraged or ordered to attend demonstrations which were staged as another method to obstruct traffic movements and to cause additional difficulties for the police and gendarmerie. Austrian Socialists believed that the KPOs intended to cause such serious disturbances by these mass gatherings that they would constitute a final blow of their attack and cause the fall of the government.

#### VI. Evidence of Direction and Support from the USSR, China or Other Communist Country

Support by Soviet occupation of KPOs operations was inconsistent and largely negative in that the Soviets--in the sectors they controlled--only in a few instances gave support to the strikers by restricting the movements and actions of the police. This fact was one of the reasons for the failure of the strike campaign. The majority of Austrian Communists had expected active Soviet support. A KPOs member had been assigned to Soviet occupation headquarters to handle liaison during the strike. In the period of the preparations, Soviet officers in civilian clothes attended frequent meetings at KPOs headquarters. Soviet Commandants in some localities made counter-strike measures difficult for the Austrian authorities by forbidding the concentration of gendarmes and their transfer from one area to another.

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In at least two cities the Soviets ordered the gendarmerie to do nothing to interfere with the strikers. The most flagrant case of Soviet interference occurred at Wiener Neustadt where, after police had re-established control of the post office and gendarmerie, they were ordered by Soviet occupation officers to return these posts to the Communists. Many vehicles bearing Soviet license plates were used by the Communists. The police cordon around Ballhausplatz was broken through by a Soviet licensed truck on 26 September 1950.

On the other hand the Soviets, by announcing from USIA headquarters on 3 October 1950 that employees who took time during work hours for strike activity would not receive compensation greatly prejudiced the success of the strikes and probably meant that the Soviets did not believe that the second phase of the strike should have been attempted at all. Obviously, KPOs could not expect full support of the Soviet occupation authorities until they gained broader support among workers to bring about more effective strike action.

**IX. Estimate of Threat from Local Communist Party Sabotage, Terrorism, etc.**

Given the general anti-Communist attitude of the major part of the Austrian population, it is doubtful that KPOs with the size of its present following (about 4.4 per cent of the total vote) could commit extensive sabotage in most areas. If Communist penetration of the guard units of the Austrian oil fields still exists, however, this area would seem to be particularly susceptible to sabotage. Limited damage conceivably could also be accomplished by Communist workers in other industries.

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